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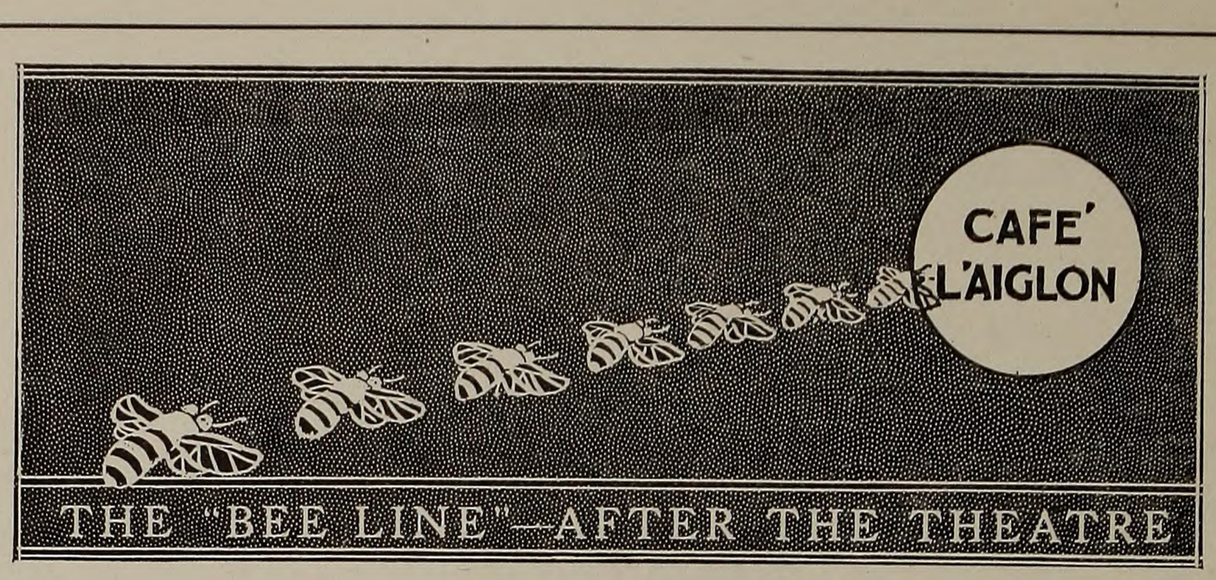
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Concerto, G Minor - - - - *Vivaldi*
Allegro Adagio Allegro

II.

Concerto, F Sharp Minor, Op. 23 - - - *Ernst*
Allegro moderato

III.

Variations on a Theme by Mozart - - - - *Scolero*

IV.

a. Arioso - - *J. S. Bach (Arr. by Sam Franko)*
b. Caprice, E. Flat major - - *Wieniawski-Kreisler*
c. Nuit Demai - - - - *Michiels-Elman*
d. Country Dance - - - *Weber-Elman*

V.

Zigeunerweisen - - - - - *Sarasate*

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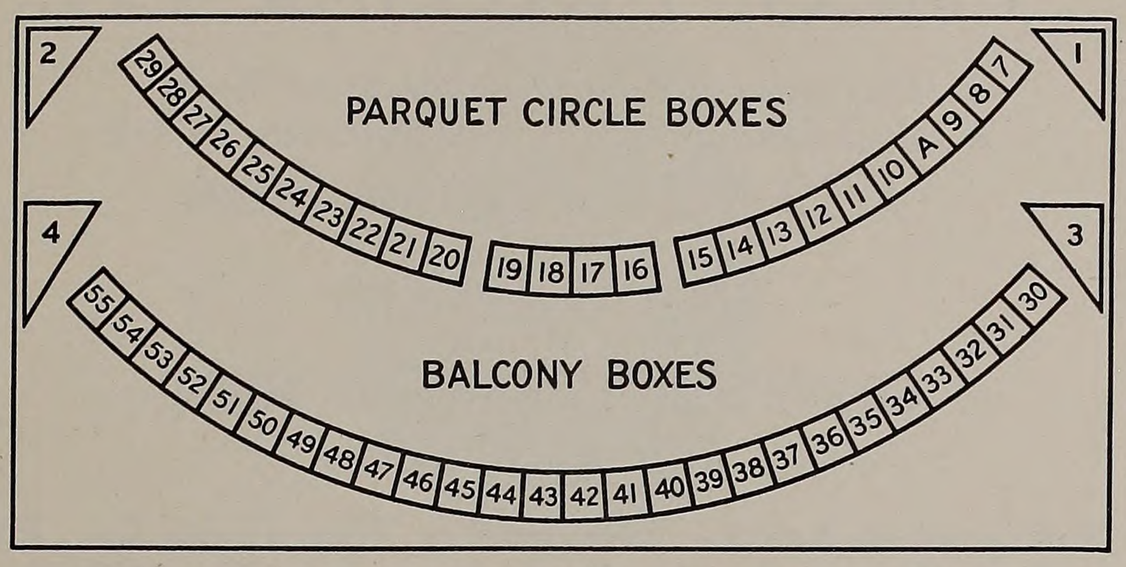
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Overture, "Don Giovanni" — **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
1756-1791

Concerto in D major, for Violin and Orchestra — **Ludwig van Beethoven**
1770-1827

I. Allegro ma non troppo
II. Larghetto
III. Rondo

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Tone Poem, "Ein Heldenleben," Op. 40 — **Richard Strauss**
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This Week's Program Notes

By Philip H. Goepp

Overture, "Don Giovanni" — **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

German, 1756-1791



It is difficult, in view of the nature of the subject, the serious spirit of the treatment of the story, and the tragic note in the overture, to remember that "Don Giovanni" is an "opera buffa"—a "comic opera," after all. The full title was *"Il dissoluto punito, ossia il Don Giovanni"*—as in an older style of English plays, "The Rake Punished, or Don Giovanni"; the subject being taken from a Spanish tale by Tirso de Molina. The truth is, the sanction of the comic guise must lie in the element of grotesque, which may unite lightest humor with the tenor of deepest tragedy.

We cannot escape the tragic feeling at the outset of the music in the first solemn chords in their halting progress. It is here, at the very beginning of the overture, that Mozart introduces the music of the fatal scene with the statue.

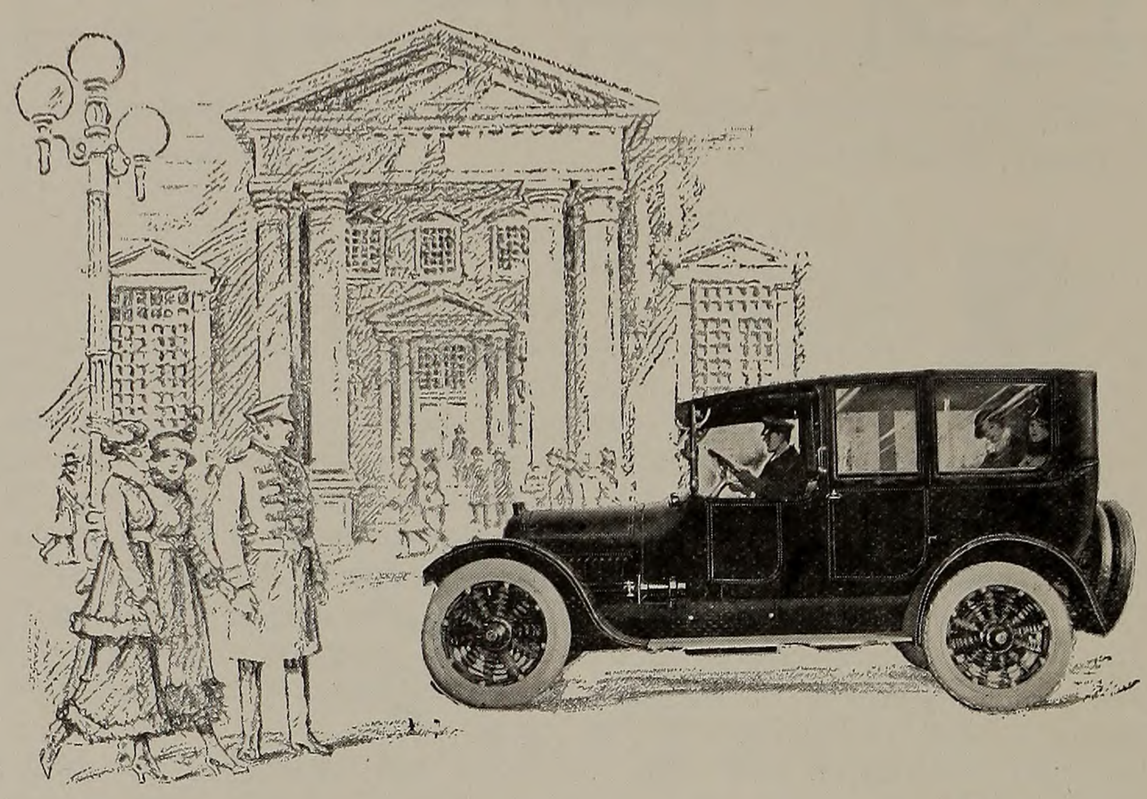
We remember how Don Giovanni has attempted to abduct Donna Anna, daughter of the Commandant of Seville, who is slain when he comes to the rescue; how in the second Act the statue that had been erected to the Commandant, addresses Don Giovanni and warns him of his impending doom. The hero laughs at the prophecy and invites the statue to attend a banquet at his house on the morrow. During the feast a knock is heard, and the statue enters. All except Leporello and Don Giovanni fly in terror. The hero orders an extra plate; the statue extends its hand. He takes the marble hand, and the cold fingers clutch him in a firm grasp. Thrice the statue urges him to repent; thrice he refuses, whereupon, as it disappears, demons rise, seize Don Giovanni, and carry him to the infernal regions.*

A skeptic might retort, in regard to the mood of the music, that this is merely the conventional manner of French overture, that begins with grave ceremony, and then breaks into a rapid rhythm. Or he might say that underlying the outer gloom is a lighter current of motion. Yet the touch of buoyant rhythm does not dispel, does not destroy the serious intent. It may merely set it off, as the play of lightning accompanies the storm.

Presently, to be sure, *Molto Allegro,* in change to major, the strings do start a coursing pulse, acclaimed by a spirited phrase of the wind, echoed by the full chorus. Yet even here in the nature of the melodies a serious cast cannot be denied. We are reminded of the famous "hammer-theme" in Mozart's "Jupiter" symphony.

The second theme, in ominous, resonant descent of tones, is answered by lightest mocking strings. But it returns, with all the rigor and awe of close fugal attack—to run off again into purling melody. This play of Nemesis and saucy mockery is clearly the main plot of the overture, in subtle forecast of the spirit and thread of the whole drama.

*For a full account of the opera see Upton's "Standard Operas."



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The first (Allegro) theme upon its return, turns into strange tonalities, followed by the former duet of fatal legend and impious retorts. The *reprise* of themes, in their original sequence, ends in a coda which for purposes of the concert, was specially written in the final line by Johann André.

In the opera, the coursing motion ends once again in the solemn phrase, amid a gradual hush, in a path of harmonies that prepare for the opening scene.

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 61 — **Ludwig van Beethoven**
German, 1770-1827



The writing of the violin concerto fell in the stirring times of 1806, when the Napoleonic invasion was brought home in a literal sense by the quartering of French officers in the country seat of Prince Lichnowsky, where Beethoven was a guest. The story is told of the master's refusal to play for the foreigners, his anger, when the host himself joined in the request, and his escape at night. "Fidelio" had reached a performance in the spring. Other fruits of the summer were the Fourth Symphony, the Piano Sonata in F Minor, and the Rasoumoffsky quartets.

Beethoven, even in the concerto (freest of all the larger forms) has always a profound idea underlying the mere casual beauty, as here the significant symbol of the four drum-beats that begin the work. As in the Fourth Symphony, there is a recurrence to more rigid tradition. But though Beethoven's works are sometimes cast in an older world, the truth and vitality of the content is all independent of the formal garb.

The scoring is for flute, oboe, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, and strings; the Larghetto is restricted to clarinets, bassoons, horns and strings.

The Concerto was written for Franz Clement, who was Kapellmeister at the Theater-an-der-Wien, as is recorded in the manuscript inscription preserved in the Imperial Library at Vienna, in which Beethoven indulged in a characteristic pun: "Concerto par Clemenza pour Clement, primo Violino e Direttore al Theatre à Vienne, dal L. v. Bthvn-, 1806."

The work was first played by Clement December 23, and was probably hurried in its completion. Clement played it without rehearsal at sight. "The MS.," says Sir George Grove, "shows that the solo part was the object of much thought and alteration by the composer—evidently after the performance." "What chance," remarks this author, "can such great and difficult works, new in spirit and teeming with difficulties, have had of influencing the public when thus brought forward?" No wonder that the Concerto was seldom heard till revived by Joachim in our own time.

The Overture to "Coriolanus," together with the Fourth Symphony, the Concerto for Violin, the Concerto for Piano in G, and

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three (Rasoumoffsky) quartets were sold to Clementi, of London, for the sum of £200. This included also an arrangement of the violin concerto for piano. "For this version," says H. E. Krehbiel, in his notes upon the work, "there exists a cadenza in Beethoven's handwriting which is remarkable in having an obligato part for the kettle-drums." The phrase, with its suggestion of four knocks, seems to be one of those instances (like the cook's question in the last quartet) where, as Grove puts it, a mere accident is transmuted by the genius of the composer.

Ein Heldenleben, Tone Poem, Op. 40 — **Richard Strauss**
(A Hero's Life) — German, born in 1864



"Ein Heldenleben," composed in 1898, is the last of his larger instrumental works, except the "Domestic Symphony." The order of the preceding ones is as follows: "From Italy"; "Don Juan"; "Macbeth"; "Death and Transfiguration"; "Till Eulenspiegel"; "Zarathustra"; "Don Quixote." While the score of the "Heldenleben" makes no mention of a story, Strauss is said to have sanctioned a somewhat categorical interpretation. The present commentator here offers the result of his own study[1] of the score (made some ten years ago, uninspired by special information) with parallel references to the story more or less accepted in Germany.

Forthwith, in lively swing, the heroic theme is announced in lively declamation, with a mere stray strum of chord, as of old troubadour. It is all rhapsody more than melody, where three parts are striking—the first for a broad, graceful sweep; the second for a bizarre, quick turn of notes, where the lack of smooth sequence jars the ear; the third, where from on high the motive descends big-stressed in whole steps, reckless of the natural tone. When the final height is reached, we seem to see the second phrase, of strange run, in constant sequence, with response, to a triumphant end.

Scarce has the theme started anew with resounding suite of rhythmic vassals, when a new scene sweeps all heroics aside in a trice, and amid rich languor of soft murmurs of whispering harps and strings the high voices sing a dulcet plaint of vague phrase, while lower voices start the more fervent song of the second theme. Quickly even this light has changed to another hue as a third melody, of brighter spring, rises like an answer to its forerunner.

The woof of languishing song winds its sweet tenor, ever with new flashes of tonal light. . . .

As all but the fervent theme remains, there is almost the strife of fugue, the voices rising in higher curves towards a bright empyrean, where the heroic theme now rings a blast. But again the later melodies interfere, first the brighter answer that seems to fit either mood. Here is a clear struggle of languorous beauty with heroic resolve—unmistakable in the quick chase of expressive

[1]Published unabridged in Vol. II of "Symphonies and their Meaning."

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strain and the spring of action. When the former has almost conquered, the heroic desire, that was lulled, breaks into lusty strife with the siren song, that seems itself to grow fierce in the fight. We feel the growing triumph of the virile theme, in a succeeding burst of great beauty. And yet at the height is not the original type of pure vigor; it is the bright answer of later tune, that seems the tonal idea of joy against the earlier action—Apollo or Balder against Mars or Wotan. The lesser figures play about in a verse of exquisite delight, that has merely deferred the full course of first motive, ending on high in trembling pause of chord that strongly leads toward the main tone.[2]

Here is one of the main surprises, where mere boldness seems alone to capture our approval. It is really, for all purposes of first hearing, a rough and scraping war of noises. Indeed the very directions for the players show the intent, borrowed as they are from hostile sounds of nature. After the first rebellion we do feel a subtle *rationale;* it is like a demon mockery of playful harmonies, grim spectres of sweet gambols. Clearly the intent is symbolic. It is not the mere wail of despair. The figures are a mere foil.

The resulting peace sounds in the expressive flow, instead of heroic desire, in minor of main theme, blended with a varied phrase of yearning song of the second, poised over harmonies of gorgeous, languorous beauty. A phase of the quick motive comes to give a new spring and a fervid, with cadence of pathos. The demon perversion of heroic idea returns for a brief shadow. Then the first theme slowly lifts itself from the passive glamour, and throws off the languor and the demon pursuit in desperate bursts of the strange run of quick notes.[3]

[2]In his book "Stories of Symphonic Studies," Mr. Arthur Gilman has collated commentaries from different sources. He presents the following as an accepted outline of the story of "Heldenleben":

I. The Hero. 2. The Hero's Adversaries. 3. The Hero's Consort. 4. The Hero's Battlefield. 5. The Hero's Works of Peace. 6. The Hero's Retirement from the World, and the End of his Striving.

The summary of the first section is as follows: 1. The Hero. "We hear first the theme of the Hero, a chivalric and wide-arched phrase, of extraordinary breadth and energy, announced forte by horns, viola, and 'cellos. Subsidiary themes follow, picturing various aspects . . . his 'pride, emotional nature, iron will, richness of imagination,' and so forth. The main theme weightily proclaimed . . . , brings the first section to a thunderous close."

[3]The story of the second section, in Mr. Gilman's composite commentary, is as follows:

II. The Hero's Adversaries. "Herein are pictured the Hero's opponents and detractors,—an envious and malicious crew, rich in all uncharitableness. The woodwind utter shrill and snarling phrases. . . . There is also an uncouth and sluggish phrase for tenor and bass tubas, intended to picture the malevolence of the dull-witted among the foe. The theme of the Hero, in a sad and meditative guise, pictures his dignified amazement, his pained and sorrowful surprise that his adversaries should so reveal the smallness and acrimony of their natures. A poignant phrase . . . (of muted strings) speaks of his temporary disquiet. . . . His dauntless courage reasserts itself, and the mocking horde are put . . . to rout."



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Suddenly a little tune of childlike joy (that gets its cheery jingle from the end of the third theme) rings out, clear of all strange humors. From this point is a long reign of fantastic monody. There is a sharp succession (in unaccompanied solo violin) of short melodic outbursts, in all kinds of swiftly changing humors. They seem like whims, or shadows of moods, that come as tempting visitations, and so stand out from the main text of subjective emotion.

Again the mere directions help to enlighten. The lively joy we last felt is followed by a sentimental phrase *much quieter* that later turns to one of *hypocritical* yearning, then glides into a jolly fling. Ever and again in the midst of these fleeting visions sounds a motive as of peace and solace in full choir of hushed chorus, that slowly unfolds a growing sequence of lyric song. One of those impish phrases was *flippant;* then after the reassuring word comes a strain, *tender, almost sentimental,* then an *insolent* turn. So, with the quieting phrase between, they run a rich gamut of humors, *sedate, playful, amiable, jolly again, faster and more raging, suddenly quieter and full of feeling, insistent and soothing, angry, scolding, tenderly expressive.* The quieter motive hovers throughout and finally ends the strange chase of elfin moods in full harmony of trembling strings and harps that softly glide or boldly twang. . . .

The languishing motive grows to enchanting melody and still the soothing strain plays about. The episode ends in the passive phase of heroic theme, again in minor, again followed by the brief play of mocking sprites, with an expressive farewell.[4]

A new figure enters, a fanfare of treble trumpets, in rough and varied harmonic call, that seems very slowly to waken the sleep of the hero. In a long struggle various of the older chance strains are flitting in teasing chase, in uncertain light. Roughly the martial mood breaks on the sentimental,—at each big rhythmic beat, relentless. Neither can be said to prevail; but the mere strife is a triumph of the martial idea.

Still a new phase is heralded by strum of low basses, following the roll of drum, in firm step and liveliest pace. There is no missing the demon theme. But the old bedlam is not here. The theme has the order of rhythmic pace. The sounds are drawn out in the semblance of tune. There is no chorus of imps, each to outdin the other. Though the slur of unearthly tunes remains, there is an agreeing harmony, but for one terrible blank at the height of the tempest. Here is a quick chase of chords; the pursuer (in the wood) has caught his lingering foe (in the strings), in a horrid clash. . . . On goes the rough ride of eerie phrase, ever haunting the border of strained sense. . . .

[4]Surely "The Hero's Wooing" is a better title, if we must have one at all, than "The Hero's Consort," in Mr. Gilman's scheme.

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Suddenly all is resolved in the sweet song of the languishing tune, that now soars on new and prouder wing. . . . The earlier discord of trumpets seems somehow more grateful with the sense of brightening triumph. . . . That third motive of the principal theme, in steady stride of even whole tones, is now eminent in antiphonal chorus of horns and of lowest brass. But the hero gains no easy dominance. Once more the demon plays his impish gambols, . . . and ever the graceful theme comes to shed the peace of its beauty.

Once again the pretty jingle breaks in, close woven with an extended line of the graceful phrase, and is answered with irresistible power by the return of soothing legend,—in simplest cadence of original tone. . . . We are sure of the survival of the heroic phrase, as it now sounds out in full career.[5]

When we await a return of the second melody, we are met by the beauty of a new idea,—new, yet most fitting. The whole texture is woven with crossing skeins of this expressive phrase in a song of moving fervor, closed by a vein of main theme. At this late point a mazing wealth of new melody keeps rising to baffle the quest of themal plan and meaning. One new pathetic strain grows out of another, as if eager of a single hearing before the end.[6]

We see in Strauss a vein whereby melodies are developed in separate phases, out of mere earlier germs. The beautiful line that begins the farewell, is a striking type.

Again, there seems less stress on actual theme than on a whole group, singing together or in close suit. So, the old theme of joy is surrounded by a thick clustering bevy of newest song. Later, in closest twining of old and strange phrases, we have a richer vein of the second phase that before was cut off. And there is still a return to a mad fury, revelling in densest fray and fugue of the harsh run (of main theme), where one turn of chord is like the last drop of bitterness.

Final peace comes in a purified mood of the heroic idea, in soft pastoral guise. The soothing and languishing motives sing once more before the last word,—of profound pathos.[7]

[5]IV. The Hero's Battlefield. " . . . Through the dust and din," runs the literal story of the commentator, "we are reminded of the inspiration of the beloved. . . . A triumphant outburst on the Hero's theme proclaims at last his victory. Yet he rejoices alone,—the world regards his conquest with cold and cynical indifference."

[6]The above-quoted commentary here discovers a celebration of the hero's works of peace. . . . "The heroic and tender themes are recalled and with them are woven . . . quotations from Strauss' earlier works. Industrious commentators have discovered twenty-three of these quotations."

[7]Mr. Gilman's collated commentary finds here "The hero's retirement from the world, and the end of his striving," preceded still by "envy and derision . . . of his benighted adversaries."

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"Molly on the Shore" — *Dance for String Orchestra*	Percy Grainger
March, "Pomp and Circumstance"	Edward Elgar

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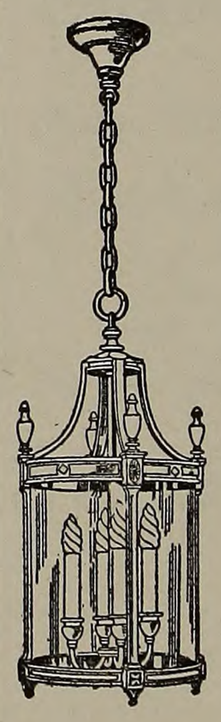
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